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DE RUEHKO #2939/01 1461024
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 261024Z MAY 06
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2586
INFO RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 1652
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY 4117
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY 0705

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 002939

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/26/2016
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [AS](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSASOR YAMAMOTO PREVIEWS CT TRILATERAL PLANS

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Joe Donovan. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Summary. Ambassador for Counterterrorism Tadamichi Yamamoto reviewed Japan's strategy for the upcoming U.S.-Japan-Australia Counterterrorism Trilateral with the Deputy Chief of Mission on May 25, 2006. Yamamoto hoped for a short plenary session that would include a threat assessment and presentations on the Manila experts meeting and on our regional counterterrorism strategies. He also wanted to discuss pressuring the UN to be more operational in its counterterrorism efforts. Five breakout sessions were under consideration: law enforcement, maritime security, intelligence, border/transport and financial issues. During the breakout sessions, Yamamoto recommended that the three ambassadors pay courtesy calls on counterterrorism-related ministries and agencies. In a pull aside after the meeting, the DCM expressed U.S. frustration with Japan's lack of concrete progress in counterterrorism programs. Yamamoto said he "understood completely" and shared the frustration. Japan's domestic ministries and agencies suffer from a lack of urgency when it comes to counterterrorism and he urged the ambassadors to make the same points during the upcoming meetings in Tokyo. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) In a meeting with Deputy Chief of Mission Donovan on May 25, 2006, Ambassador for Counterterrorism Tadamichi Yamamoto explained Japan's strategy for the upcoming U.S.-Japan-Australia Counterterrorism Trilateral on June 8-9. Japan plans to invite the delegation heads and key representatives of the breakout sessions to a working dinner on June 8. Japan will set up separate tables for each breakout session and for the delegation heads to facilitate discussion about plans for the next day.

Plenary Session -----

¶3. (SBU) Yamamoto hoped for a short plenary session in order to focus on concrete projects. A threat assessment had been done at the Trilateral in Washington, DC, and he thought we could dispose of the assessment in a few minutes since not much had changed. Donovan suggested removing the assessment from the plenary agenda and asking the delegations to discuss it over dinner the night before. Yamamoto agreed that was a possibility, but reiterated that, unless new information has surfaced, an assessment during the plenary would take very little time. A fuller discussion is necessary on the experts meeting held in Manila in February, Yamamoto said. He also suggested sharing our respective counterterrorism strategies for the region during the plenary session.

¶4. (C) Japan would also like to follow up on the Roma-Lyon meeting agreement to apply greater pressure on the UN. We need to urge the UN to be more operational in its counterterrorism efforts. Yamamoto suggested that the ambassadors use the working dinner to develop an approach.

If an agreement can be reached, he hoped to formalize it during the plenary.

¶5. (C) When asked if we could include countering extremist ideologies during the plenary, Yamamoto responded that the discussion in DC was very systematic but academic. If concrete ideas have emerged then the plenary might be an appropriate place to discuss it. Yamamoto worried that, because it is a sensitive subject, discussion might run too long to include in the plenary. He suggested we consider dealing with it in a breakout session and then have a special Trilateral-wide session on it after we hear the breakout session reports.

Breakout Sessions

¶6. (C) Japan suggested three breakout sessions: law enforcement (U.S. lead), maritime security (Australia lead) and intelligence (Japan lead). Yamamoto noted that Australia would like to add two more: border/transport and financial issues. Japan's financial experts did not have enough substance to share so MOFA had left financial issues off the agenda. MOFA is willing to include it, but the United States or Australia would have to chair the session, Yamamoto explained. The DCM reported that we, too, would like to have a financial breakout session on cash couriers, and promised to get back to Yamamoto about possibly chairing it.

¶7. (C) Since time is limited, MOFA will encourage the breakout session representatives to discuss their issues over dinner on June 8 and come up with a plan on how to structure their respective sessions on June 9. Yamamoto urged us to divvy up the chairmanships of the breakout sessions soon and start working on concrete proposals. He requested that we share our proposals with him as soon as possible. He had already spoken with Australia and Yamamoto summarized the ideas heard so far.

Law enforcement - community policing, technical assistance, capabilities assessments.

Maritime security - interdiction.

Border/transport - focus on Manila and DC meetings, port security.

Financing - cash couriers.

Intelligence - more of a freewheeling discussion about what each country is doing, compare plans for future cooperation.

Courtesy Calls

¶8. (C) During the breakout sessions, Yamamoto recommended that the three ambassadors pay courtesy calls on counterterrorism-related ministries and agencies. In rank order, he suggested MOFA, the National Policy Agency, the Cabinet's Crisis Management Office, the Coast Guard and the Transportation Ministry. Donovan noted that there were eight ministries and agencies working on counterterrorism (the other three being the Cabinet Intelligence Research Office, Public Security Investigation Agency and the Finance Ministry) and wondered if it would be awkward to visit only some of them. Yamamoto said his suggestions represented the ministries with operational responsibilities. A group meeting or lunch may be possible, but would affect the level of participants. He predicted that officials at the Deputy Director General level would attend a group meeting, and said he hoped for higher-level interaction.

Conclusion and Future Work

¶9. (C) Yamamoto suggested having these high-level meetings once a year, and working-level meetings twice a year. The working-level meetings should be very concrete, like the one held in Manila in February, and Yamamoto suggested we consider focusing on Indonesia next. Despite Australian interest in Bangladesh or other South Asian countries, Yamamoto argued that we should deal first with Southeast

Asia. This is another issue to discuss during dinner and, hopefully, announce on June 9.

¶10. (C) Yamamoto asked if Ambassador Crumpton hoped to use this as a "political instrument" and if he planned to make a public announcement. Unless the United States or Australia has strong feelings, Japan would maintain the low-profile approach.

Frustration with Japan's Progress

¶11. (C) The DCM noted that the bilateral working group had not met in a long time and asked if we could jumpstart the project. Yamamoto expressed enthusiasm but commented that it would have to be revisited after the Trilateral. In a pull aside after the meeting, the DCM expressed U.S. frustration with Japan's lack of concrete progress in counterterrorism programs. The Trilateral is an excellent opportunity for Japan to layout a concrete agenda, he urged. Yamamoto said he "understood completely" and shared the frustration. Japan's domestic ministries and agencies suffer from a lack of urgency when it comes to counterterrorism and he urged the ambassadors to make the same points during the upcoming meetings in Tokyo.

¶12. (C) MOFA Counterterrorism Cooperation Division Director Rokuichiro Michii separately shared that it would be better for either the United States or Australia to raise Indonesia as a possible focus for the next working-level meeting. If raised by MOFA, MOFA would come under heavy criticism by the other Japanese ministries and agencies. These other organizations view themselves as solely focused on domestic issues and do not want to expand their responsibilities beyond Japan's borders, Michii said.
SCHIEFFER